

To Whom It May Concern

I am submitting this letter for use as testimony during the February 21st 4pm meeting of the Appropriations Committee.

As the parent of a 16 year high school student and a 13 year old middle schooler as well as the aunt of a high school student in Danbury, I am writing to express my support for a strong public school system in Connecticut.

I have been a lifelong Connecticut resident and am proud of the education I received in Danbury so much so that I chose to stay here and raise my children in the state. Not only as a parent do I understand how important a strong public education is to students, as a citizen who loves this state it is even more important to keep the strengthen the integrity of our public education system. Students and families who are connected to the state and their towns and cities are more likely to stay in the state, work in the state and maybe even open businesses in the state. Strong vital public schools keep us connected to our communities. A well rounded education is more important than ever in this global society we live in now.

Well funded public schools offer students not just the traditional education, which is very important, but also classes in arts and technology, Public schools are diverse and nondiscrimintory. This is an enormous benefit to not just students but to our society as a whole.

It is more critical than ever to keep our public schools strong and funded. Virtually all jobs require at minimum a high school diploma and students who had a diverse and well rounded education will be able to contribute financially to the state. A state's priority should be education, To balance a budget on the backs of children is financially short sighted. We should be enticing families to stay in our state, to work in our state, to open business in our state and to give our children the best public education we can offer. Not cutting the already stressed schools we have.

I love Connecticut, I love living here, I am proud that I am raising my children here and I want my children to contribute to this great state and to do that they need a good public education. Public education is the cornerstone of a strong democracy and economic growth.

Thank you for your consideration

Tonya Clark